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SUBJECT: UN HOLDS SECOND SYPOSIUM ON "VICTIMS OF TERRORISM"

¶1. Summary. Robert Orr, Chair of the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and the UN Secretariat, chaired on March 18 on behalf of the Secretary General the second symposium on supporting victims of terrorism. Orr opened the symposium by stating that its objective was to launch the UN's report on supporting victims of terrorism and to have a discussion on the way forward. Carrie Lemack of Families of September 11 and Carla Khammar, a UN employee who was injured in a terrorist attack in Algiers in 2007, also made remarks.

Several member states made statements including Spain, Italy, Israel, Turkey, Colombia, Ecuador, the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union and USUN. General themes included the need for the UN to find ways to fill gaps in support to victims. Brian Davey of the Secretariat provided details on how the UN might improve its capacity to address victim's issues. Orr's proposals at the end of the symposium included the possibility of creating a UN web portal on the issue, the development of a UN mechanism to address victims issues (upon the request of member states), and the creation of a UN rapid response team. End Summary

¶2. After Orr gave an initial overview of the symposium's objectives, a video was shown that included highlights from the statements of presenters in the September - 2008 UN victims symposium. The presenters in the video, including victims, and family of victims, gave a human and personal touch to the issue. Orr said the video would be available on YouTube as of March 19. After the video, Orr presented the UN's report on supporting victims of terrorism that includes the following topics: giving victims a face and a voice and legal status defending their legal rights, protecting victims' dignity, providing medical and psycho-social support and financial assistance to victims, and building solidarity with victims of terrorism.

¶3. Brian Davey, Director of Medical Services in the UN's Department of Resources Management, said that support dedicated to assist victims and their families should be improved within the Secretariat and at some point, institutionalized. Although Davey said the envisioned support cannot be more than the UN can provide, he said that the UN needs to take on this task so that each individual circumstance can be addressed. As examples of ways to begin, Davey said that listening to victims and survivors is critical. He said long-term medical support including trauma counseling is also critical. Davey concluded by saying that he is reviewing victims support issues from the past to figure out how best to address them.

¶4. The member states that spoke all supported the UN's initiative to enhance support to victims of terrorism. Israel's Deputy PermRep said that he was impressed with the video and that last September's conference had broken new ground. He also said that Israel has shared in the human force of suffering from the victim's perspective. The four member states that contributed monetarily to the victims symposium in September, Colombia, Italy, Spain and the UK, all said that Orr's and the Secretariat's work on supporting victims is extremely important and that it needs to continue. Turkey's representative said that in the upcoming review conference on the ICC, the issue of jurisdiction of terrorism

should be listed as one of the items to be discussed. USUN delivered a short statement supporting the initiative by the UN to support victims of terrorism including through the UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Wolff